

Minority Health Facts

AFRICAN AMERICANS in Rhode Island



INTRODUCTION

This report provides information about major health indicators in the African American/Black population of Rhode Island. An *African American/Black* is defined by the Office of Management and Budget (Directive 15) as *a person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa*. This report presents data on socio-economic characteristics, morbidity and mortality, behavioral risks, infectious disease, maternal and child health, and access to healthcare among African American/Black Rhode Islanders in comparison to the overall state population. Please note that race and ethnic status for some Health Department data sets are based on self-identification.

POPULATION DEMOGRAPHICS

According to the 2000 U.S. Bureau of the Census, there are 46,908 African Americans in Rhode Island (RI), making this group the second largest minority population in the state. Approximately 4.5% of the total RI population is African American. Nearly 99% of African Americans in the state live in urban areas. The median age for the African American population is 26.8 years whereas the total state median age is 36.7 years. Nearly 85% of the African American population is under the age of 50; 70% of the state population is under the age of 50.

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

The following are socio-economic characteristics of Rhode Island's African American population from the 2000 Census. These characteristics may affect the health of African American Rhode Islanders.

- There are almost *three* times as many African Americans living below poverty level as the overall state population.
- The median household income for African Americans is \$24,973—approximately \$17,000 less than the state median.
- A *lower* percent of African Americans graduate from high school than the overall state population, and a *greater* percent of African Americans are unemployed than the overall state population.

Table A: Socio-Economic Data

	AFRICAN AMERICAN	STATE
Percent of population living below poverty*	30.0	11.9
Percent of population that is unemployed*	7.5	3.6
Median household income*	\$24,973	\$42,090
High school graduation rate** (percent)	71.0	81.0

SOURCES: *U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000. **RI Kids Count Factbook, 2004.

MORTALITY

- The top three causes of death for both the African American and the overall state populations are heart disease, cancer, and stroke. While *diabetes and unintentional injuries* are ranked as the fourth and fifth leading causes of death in the African American population, these causes of death are not ranked among the top five for the overall state population.

BEHAVIORAL RISK FACTORS

- The African American population participates *less* in physical activity than the overall state population.
- African Americans have *higher* rates of overweight and obesity.
- The African American population consumes *fewer* fruits and vegetables than the overall state population.



Table B: Leading Causes of Death, 1999-2002

#	AFRICAN AMERICAN	STATE
1	Heart Disease	Heart Disease
2	Cancer	Cancer
3	Stroke	Stroke
4	Diabetes	Chronic Respiratory Diseases
5	Unintentional Injuries	Pneumonia/Influenza

SOURCE: RI Dept. of Health, Division of Vital Records, RI Resident Deaths, ICD-10 Codes, 1999-2002.

Table C: Indicators of Behavioral Risk Factors

	AFRICAN AMERICAN	STATE
Percent of adult population ¹ that participates in light to moderate physical activity for at least 30 minutes per day	26.5	36.9
Percent of adult population that is overweight ² (20 yrs+)	65.2	56.9
Percent of adult population that is obese ³ (20 yrs+)	28.8	18.4
Percent of adult population that consumes at least five daily servings of fruits and vegetables per day	22.6	28.2
Percent of adult population that smokes cigarettes	26.1	23.0
Percent of adult population that consumed 5+ drinks on one or more occasions in past month (binge-drinking)	14.6	16.9

SOURCE: RI Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System 2000, Healthy People 2010 (2000-03 frequencies).

¹Adult population refers to individuals 18 years and older unless otherwise specified.

²Overweight defined by CDC as BMI ≥ 25.

³Obesity defined by CDC as BMI ≥ 30.

**Table D: Incidence Rates of Infectious Diseases:
Cases per 100,000 Population**

INFECTIOUS DISEASES	AFRICAN AMERICAN	STATE
Gonorrhea*	849.0	93.0
Chlamydia*	1846.0	286.0
Tuberculosis**	21.5	4.4
HIV/AIDS***	114.5	12.8

SOURCES: RI Dept. of Health, Office of Communicable Diseases,
 *Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD) Surveillance Data 2003.
 **Tuberculosis Database 2003.
 ***RI Epidemiologic Profile of HIV/AIDS 2002.

Table E: Indicators of Maternal and Child Health

	AFRICAN AMERICAN	STATE
Percent of pregnant women with delayed prenatal care*	15.8	9.1
Rate of births to teens ages 15-19 (per 1,000 teens)*	74.7	33.1
Percent of births to mothers with less than 12 years of education*	22.0	15.0
Percent of infants with low birth weight (<5.5 lbs)*	11.8	7.5
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)**	14.3	6.6
Percent of children in poverty (< 18yrs)***	38.0	17.0
Percent of children under age 6 with high lead levels ($\geq 10\mu\text{g/dL}$)****	18.0	7.0

SOURCES: *RI Dept. of Health, Division of Family Health, Maternal and Child Health Database.
 ** Infant Mortality Database, 1998-2002.
 *** U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000.
 **** RI Dept. of Health, Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention. Program based on highest lead test result during calendar year 2002.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES

- The rate of gonorrhea is *nine times higher* in the African American population than in the overall state population.
- The rate of chlamydia is approximately *6.5 times* higher in the African American population than in the overall state population.
- In 2003, the rate of tuberculosis cases was about *five times higher* for African Americans than it was for the overall state population.
- HIV/AIDS rates are approximately *nine times higher* for African Americans than the overall state population.

MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

- The state population as a whole has better maternal and child health outcomes than the African American population in RI.
- *Fewer* African Americans receive early prenatal care, and more than two times as many African Americans give birth as a teenager than the overall state teen population.
- *More than twice* as many African American infants die before their first birthday as the overall RI infant population.
- *More than two times* as many African American children grow up in poverty as the overall state population of children.

ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

- A *higher* percent of African Americans report not having health insurance than the overall state population.
- A *higher* percent of African Americans also report being unable to afford a doctor at some point in time than the overall state population.



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Table F: Indicators of Access to Healthcare

	AFRICAN AMERICAN	STATE
Percent of adults less than 65 years old that report having no health insurance*	16.9	9.5
Percent of adults that report a specific source of ongoing healthcare*	82.3	84.4
Percent of population (all ages) stating usual source of care as none or emergency room**	8.9	5.1
Percent of women aged 40+ that report receiving a mammogram in the past 2 yrs*	90.2	91.2
Percent of women that reported having a pap test in the past 2 yrs*	90.9	87.8
Percent of adults that said "yes" when asked if there was a time they could not afford to see a doctor**	13.8	7.8

SOURCES: *RI Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System 2000-03, Healthy People 2010 (2000-03 frequencies).

**Health Interview Survey, 2001.

For more information regarding minority health and the statistics contained in this report, please contact:

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